

PhD positions – Forensic Data Science Laboratory – Aston University

The following provides general information about PhD positions at the Forensic Data Science Laboratory <https://forensic-data-science.net/>.

The number of enquiries we receive about PhD positions is such that we cannot provide an individualized response to an enquiry unless it follows the advice provided below.

The enquiry must include a research proposal that addresses a real problem in forensic science and that is aligned with the Forensic Data Science Laboratory's research programme. This requirement is designed to weed out applicants who do not have an appropriate background and/or who are not serious enough to have put in the time and effort required to craft an appropriate research proposal.

There are three funding options:

- 100% externally funded
 - including self funded
- tuition fee waiver
 - for domestic or international students
- tuition fee waiver plus 3 year scholarship
 - the scholarship includes a stipend that is currently GBP 20,780 per year
 - the application deadline is usually around April
 - these are highly competitive

Start times are usually September or January.

We will help suitable applicants complete formal applications for funding, but only

after we are first convinced that we want to recruit the applicant.

Any applicant for a PhD position in the Forensic Data Science Laboratory must have:

- a solid background in statistics / machine learning
- a demonstrated ability to code in Python, MATLAB, or similar

Highly desirable are:

- a solid background in one or more branches of forensic science
- a solid background in forensic inference and statistics
 - e.g., to the level provided in our CPD course *Concepts of Forensic Inference and Statistics* <https://www.aston.ac.uk/study/courses/concepts-forensic-inference-and-statistics-standalone-module/>
- authorship on peer-reviewed journal articles or conference-proceedings papers published in reputable venues

The applicant must provide a research proposal. The research proposal:

- must address a real problem in forensic science
 - this requires a real understanding of forensic science
- must be aligned with the Forensic Data Science Laboratory's research programme
 - this requires a real understanding of our research programme, not just a cursory reading of our website

General guidance on how to write a research proposal is available at

<https://www.aston.ac.uk/graduate-school/how-to-apply/research-proposal>. It specifies a limit of 1,500 words excluding references. The draft you send us can be longer. It may benefit from being longer, but please write succinctly (do not make it unnecessarily long).

The Forensic Data Science Laboratory has limited resources. We are not part of a larger mainstream-forensic-science department. In your research proposal, you should therefore give thought to how to access any resources that may be needed for collection of data and for any analysis of non-digital data, and whether these may require collaboration with others, e.g., researchers at Aston University, researchers at another university, or researchers or practitioners at a forensic-service provider. We are open to considering co-supervision of PhD projects with researchers who are based at other universities and who have expertise in particular branches of forensic science.

Enquiries should, in the first instance, be directed to Prof Geoffrey Stewart Morrison, Director, Forensic Data Science Laboratory <g.s.morrison@aston.ac.uk>. The enquiry should include:

- a draft of your research proposal
- a copy of your CV
- a sample of your scientific writing, e.g.:
 - a published or submitted journal article or conference-proceeding paper
 - a completed or draft Master's thesis

Each of the above should be provided as a Word document or as a pdf.

Send the enquiry early. Do not wait until a funding opportunity is announced.